



THE STORIED CAREER OF N34, THE FAA's LAST DC3

The DC3/R4D known as "N34" has had a distinguished career with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), culminating with its appearances at airshows and at stops on the National Air Tour during the celebration of the Centennial of Flight.

The aircraft was built in 1945 at the Douglas Aircraft plant located on Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma City, OK. It was accepted by the U.S. Navy as an R4D (naval equivalent of a DC3), and was flown to the Norfolk (VA) Naval Air Station for its first official duty as a Navy transport in December of that year. During its tour in the Navy, the aircraft served in Rome, Naples, Paris, Algiers, Frankfurt, Brussels, Oslo, Stockholm, Dublin, Cairo, Kuwait, Baghdad, and many other interesting locations.

In 1956, the plane was loaned to the Civil Aeronautics Administration (CAA, the FAA's predecessor agency) and modified with the latest equipment to flight check the accuracy of navigational aids in the National Airspace System. Assigned the registration number N34, in 1958 the aircraft began its service with Federal Aviation Agency.

After 23 years of service with the FAA, N34 was scheduled to be declared surplus. However, then-Administrator Donald D. Engen concurred with Aviation System Standards employees at the Aeronautical Center in Oklahoma City who wanted to preserve the plane for its historical value. On March 29, 1985, Engen ordered restoration of the aircraft to the original colors of the Civil Aeronautics Administration. The agency flew N34 to various airshows around the country to showcase the history of the FAA and the CAA and to inform the public about the FAA's mission. In 1993, N34 was placed in storage at the Aeronautical Center.

Realizing that N34 could play an inspiring role in celebrating the Centennial of Flight, current FAA Administrator Marion C. Blakey authorized the agency to restore the aircraft to flying condition. Throughout 2003, N34 will serve as a highly visible reminder of the FAA's invaluable contributions to both domestic and international aviation.